



Wyoming National Guard RETIREE NEWS

Volume IV, Number 2, Published by Wyoming Military Department for Retirees' and Veterans' News

July 2004

CHANGES

WY NG Retirees & WY Veterans:

Let us take a moment of your time to discuss some changes. You are about to read the Wyoming Military Department's first issue of the WY NG Retiree's and Veteran's newsletters combined into one publication. The first half of the publication will be dedicated to WY NG Retiree news and last part to WY Veteran news. A newsletter will be published three times a year (Mar, Jul & Nov). Combining forces will reduce costs, improve communications, help ensure we are speaking with one voice and confirm we have the very best product for all concerned. Some are receiving both newsletters, so you know similar topics were featured. You are urged to read the entire newsletter. The following definitions will help individuals determine what information is applicable. A military retiree is defined as fulfilling 20 years or more of satisfactory service and receiving an annuity or eligible to attain one at age 60. A military veteran is defined as an individual who has served satisfactorily any time in the active United States Armed Forces. A surviving spouse is defined as the widow of a deceased military retiree. Members & leaders of the Wyoming Veteran's Commission, Veteran's Service Organizations, and all WY Military Retirees and Veterans are encouraged to submit information, obituaries, drafted or requested articles and news releases to: Bob Holmes, Editor, WY Retiree's and Veteran's Newsletter, 1508 Hot Springs Ave., Cheyenne, WY 82001-5361, (307) 632-7566; Cell: (307) 630-1676; Fax (307) 778-8741; email: RHolmes632@aol.com.

WMHS

Wyoming Militia Historical Society (WMHS) was established to collect and share the history of the WY NG which dates back to 1870. Since the beginning of the organization in 1987, WMHS has collected more than 5,000 items. They range from an 1800s US Army Quartermaster bed to collecting the guard units reports from Iraq. 2 Wyoming Guard histories have been published. First was a WPA writers project completed in 1940. Second was printed five years ago. It covered the history of the 300th AFA Bn successful efforts in Korea during the 1950s. A complete 130 plus years of history cries to be published. Many, many segments have been written. A coordinator and money is need to complete this important task. Uniforms, trophies, pictures, books, crests, foot lockers, personal collections, etc., we have received in the last seventeen years need trained supervision. We are very excited to announce the history coordinator and trained supervisor may become a reality. MG Ed Wright is willing to ask the legislature for a paid state historian slot. With a qualified historian to lead us, we WMHS volunteer members could support him/her with our time, energy and finances. Speaking of finances, anyone and everyone is welcome to join the Wyoming Militia Historical Society. Dues are only \$10.00 a calendar year and can be sent to the WMHS treasurer Don Whitman, 5518 Marshall Road, Cheyenne, WY 82009. A hug and a great big thank you goes to the Adjutant General, Major General Ed Wright for his support and vision.

WYNGA

Wyoming National Guard Association held it's annual meeting at the Shrine Club in Cheyenne on 17 Apr 2004 with about 100 in attendance. Attendance at prior Board of Governors (BOG) meetings was never enough to form a quorum due to so many deployments. Changes to the bylaws were approved to correct this problem by reducing the number of board members, consolidating committees and adding that a proxy vote could be given to any paid member. BOG will now consist of 2 ARNG enl, 2 ANG enl, 1 ARNG off, 1 ANG off and 2 retirees. Also the need for a 2nd Vice was eliminated. WYNGA needs retiree support more now than ever before with all of the deployments. To become a member it is only a one time \$25.00 for a life membership. Make your check out to WYNGA and mail to WYNGA, % CMSgt Doug Hensala, Membership Committee Chairman, PO Box 20172, Cheyenne, WY 82003. Also check with CMSgt Hensala on EANGUS and NGAUS membership at (307) 772-6401. Volunteer retiree delegates are needed to attend the annual conferences. NGAUS 126th 2004 Conference will be held 14-16 Sep at the Las Vegas Convention Center, Las Vegas, NV. EANGUS Conference will be held 22-25 Aug at the Gait House in Louisville, KY. Food for thought. WYNGA, NGAUS & EANGUS are professional organizations much like the American Bar Association, American Medical Association, etc. If you consider yourself to be a retired military professional, which you truly are, then you should be a member of your professional organizations.

OBITUARIES

Each time this portion of the newsletter is dedicated to pay tribute to members or spouses who have recently been lost.

CHARLES K. "CHUCK" BOYER, 59, died 5 May 2004, at the Sheridan Memorial Hospital from complications of cancer. He was born in Laramie on 23 Apr 1945 and was a life time resident of WY. He moved to Sheridan in 1978 to open a Plumbing and Heating Company. Boyer enlisted in the Laramie unit HHC, 1022d Engr Bn on 10 Jan 64 and was honorably discharged from the 133d Engr Co as a SSG on 9 Jan 70.

PHILLIP D. ELLIOTT, 52, died 26 Apr 04 at the VA Hospital in Cheyenne. Phillip was born 17 Mar 52 at Fort Hood, TX. He was a dedicated and life long medic, serving much of the time as a volunteer. He was a member of the Underwater Search & Rescue team and a volunteer fireman for Laramie County. In his early years he worked as a technician for United Blood Service. Phillip enlisted 13 Nov 71 in HHB, 115th FA Gp, WY ARNG, and spent most of his time as a medic. He was honorably discharged from HHB, 115th FA Bde on 2 Jan 93 and transferred to Retired Reserve as SSG. He was buried with full military honors provided by 115th Bde.

THEODORE ROY FOLEY, 66, a resident of Sinclair, WY, died at United Medical Center, East, in Cheyenne 28 Mar 04. He was born 30 Jan 1938 in Stephenson, MI and had been a resident of Sinclair since 1981. Foley served in the USMC from 1956-1963 and in the USAF Res from 1964-1969. He joined the WY ARNG Rawlins unit 25 Aug 79 and served continuously until 21 Mar 88 when he was transferred to the Retired Reserve as SSG.

GEORGE K. MAYER, 68, of Yucaipia, CA, died in his home after a short battle with cancer. He was born 19 Jan 1936 in Chicago, IL and joined the US Army 12 Jan 54, serv-

ing continuously until 20 Jun 63. George joined the WY ARNG Casper unit 5 Jan 65 and was retired from military service at age 60 in 1996 as a SFC. Memorial services were conducted for him at the Oregon Trail Veterans Cemetery on 27 May 04.

JOHN G "JACK" McLENNAN, 86, of Cheyenne died 3 May 04 at the Life Care Center. He was born 11 Nov 1917 in a log cabin at the historic Pitchfork Ranch near Meeteetse, WY. Jack was among the last of the Wyoming 115th Cavalry "Powder River, Let'er Buck" gang. He enlisted in Hq Troop F, 115th Cav on 21 Jan 41 and was inducted into Federal Service with the WY National Guard to Fort Lewis on 24 Feb 41. He was separated from active service and the WY National Guard 29 Dec 1945.

LOUIS "LOUIE" POULOS, 85, died at his home in Sheridan 18 Feb 2004. He was born 25 Aug 1918 in Sheridan and was a life long resident of Sheridan. Louie is also the last of a breed as he was a member of the WY 115th Cavalry "Powder River, Let'er Buck" Gang. He enlisted in Troop B, 115th Cav 3 Nov 37 and was inducted into Federal Service

with the WY National Guard to Fort Lewis on 24 Feb 41. He was separated from active service and the WY NG 8 Dec 1945. He then served with the USAR from 3 Sep 47 to 22 Oct 50 and was activated to Korea for the war during the period 23 Oct 50 to 30 Aug 51. Louie returned to the WY ARNG when he reenlisted into the Sheridan unit 2 Jan 69 and was retired at age 60, 25 Aug 78, as SGT.

RICHARD B. "DICK"

SCHNORENBURG

82, died at the Kindred Hospital in Denver, CO 25 May 2004. He was born 10 Sep 1921 at Van Tassell, WY. Dick served in the US Navy during WWII from 13 Oct 42 to 5 Oct 45. He then enlisted into the WY ARNG with the Lusk unit, Troop E, 115th Mech Cav as E4 7 Apr 47. He was appointed a 2LT 23 Jul 48 and subsequently commanded the Lusk Unit until ROPA terminated his commission. Dick enlisted into the Lusk unit and transferred to the 960th Ord Co when the Lusk unit was deactivated as SFC. He then served continuously until he was transferred to the Retired Reserve as CPT 1 Jul 1977.

(obituaries continued on next page)

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reviewed by the Wyoming Military Department Ethics Advisor.

July 2004

Obituaries cont'd from page 2

PETER B. "PETE" SEARS, 51, died at his residence in Casper after suffering 10 months with cancer. He was born in Sheridan 7 Jun 52 and spent most of his life in Sheridan. Pete served with the US Army from 20 Oct 71 to 12 Oct 74 and then in the USAR from 13 Oct 74 to 23 Jul 75. He joined the WY ARNG unit in Sheridan as a cook 24 Jul 75 and served there continuously until 11 Apr 95 when he was transferred to the Retired Reserve as SSG.

THERON F. "SKIP" STIMSON, 83, died at Iverson Memorial Hospital in Laramie after losing a battle with acute leukemia. He was born 14 Jun 1920 in Emerson, NE. Skip had a very colorful and distinguished military career. He enlisted in US Army 19 May 42 and appointed 2LT 28 Apr 43 after completing OCS followed by service in the European Theater. Skip was separated from active duty 15 Jun 46 as CPT TC but returned to active duty as a Regular Army Officer from 7 Jul 47 to 5 Apr 48. Skip's service with the WY ARNG began on 2 Jan 49 when he joined the 141st Tank Bn as CPT and was activated with the unit for the Korean War. He was promoted to MAJ 17 Apr 53, LTC 27 May 60, COL 1 Feb 65 and held every major officer position including Battalion Commander, Group Commander and OCS Commandant. He was appointed Asst AG for Army 10 Aug 70 and promoted to BG. Skip remained in that capacity until his separation and transfer to the Retired Reserve 28 Feb 1979. BG Theron F. "Skip" Stimson was buried at Green Hills Cemetery in Laramie with full military honors.

JOE VELAZQUEZ, 75 died 7 Mar 2004 in Glendale, AZ. He was born 2 Jul 1928. Joe was a resident of Cheyenne for 21 years before moving to AZ. He served 33 years in the Air National Guard and started his military career in the USAF during 12 Sep 50-11 Sep 54. Joe joined the WY ANG

11 Apr 58 as SSG and served until 19 Sep 61. He returned to duty with WY ANG 9 Mar 63 and was subsequently promoted to TSgt 4 Jan 65 and MSGT 26 Dec 67. Joe left WY ANG for AZ 5 Jan 73 to finish his military career.

WILLIAM E. "BILL" WOOD, 83, died at his home in Beaverton, OR. and was born in Vail SD but spent 30 year of his life in Sheridan, WY. Bill is another member of those 115th Cavalry "Powder River, Let 'er Buck" gang. He enlisted in Troop B, 115th Cav 2 May 38 and was inducted into Federal Service with the WY NG unit to Fort Lewis on 24 Feb 41. His military service then took him to be a Pathfinder Paratrooper with the 82d Airborne Div where he was a part of the Normandy invasion and the Battle of the Bulge. He was separated from active service 23 Sep 45. He rejoined the WY ARNG on 4 Nov 49 with the 300th AFA Bn as a MSGT and served in the Korean War with the unit. MSGT Wood ended his colorful military career on 3 Nov 52.

MILITARY FUNERAL COORDINATOR
Nationwide, 18 contract positions have been advertised for a state Military Funeral Honors (MFH) Operations Coordinator. The Military Personnel Services Corporation (MPSC) in Falls Church, VA has the responsibility of placing a contract MFH Coordinator in each state. CW5 (recently retired WY ARNG) Jim Burnell has been selected as the contract person for WY. He can be reached at (307) 772-5136 or cell phone (307) 286-0221. Initial goal is to review and revise existing practices and policies pertaining to participation and providing MFH for deceased veterans. Congressional law and DOD policy requires a minimum of two uniformed service members on a MFH team, of which at least one shall be of the same service the deceased veteran was a member. Least amount of services to be provided are folding of the United States

Flag, presenting of the flag to the family and playing of taps. The Adjutant General for the state may authorize additional MFH services on a case by case basis. Both law and policy allow and recommend establishing a strong partnership with Veteran Service Organizations (VSO) in the conducting of MFH services.

Standard Operation Procedures (SOP) have been drafted and are being circulated for command review and concurrence. WY has obtained and distributed fourteen electronic bugles for use during MFH. This system provides a high and realistic quality sound. In addition to establishing MFH teams within the National Guard, the MFH Coordinator will be contacting, within the state, all the funeral home directors, all VSOs, and representatives of the Army, Navy, Air Force, Marine Corps and Coast Guard. Effort will be to establish a good and firm working relationship with all concerned in providing the best MFH services for WY veterans. By 2004 summer's end it is hoped to have established a single point of contact for MFH services.

Military retirees are welcome to participate to supplement the uniformed service members. Military retirees who are approved to participate on MFH teams must be in the prescribed uniform designated by the MFH team leader. Retiree may require refresher training on MFH procedures before joining a MFH team. Retirees may receive a \$50 stipend for performing MFH. This is a taxable income, however, it does not affect the amount of your current or future retired pay. Request for payment will be made on SF 1164 and processed through the MFH Coordinator to the USPFO for Wyoming for disbursement and issuing of a check. There are no federal funds available at this time to pay VSO members for participation. However, the WY Veterans' Commission has the capability to reimburse the VSO from State funds.

57TH LEGISLATURE RESULTS

The 57th Wyoming Legislature and the Governor were very supportive of the WY Military Department. Budget items approved included:

1. \$1.9 million dollars were approved to purchase 6,000 acres of Osburn land adjacent to Camp Guernsey impact area plus \$500,000 was approved to cover administrative and environmental expenses for the purchase.
2. \$1.9 million dollars were approved to cover cost to cleanup lead at many of the state armories.
3. \$108,000 were approved for Military Support to Civilian Authorities.
4. Additional money was made available for Oregon Trail State Veteran's Cemetery to replace equipment.
5. An additional full-time employee was approved for the WY Veteran Commission bringing the total to 3.5 employees to service WY 57,000 veterans. The purchase of two vehicles was also approved.
6. More funds were provided for WY ANG facility support which included the hiring of two more employees.
7. Armory operation and maintenance funding levels were increased from 66 cents per sq ft to \$1.07 which included salaries for two full time maintenance personnel.
8. \$8.3 million were appropriated to cover major maintenance funding of which \$500,000 were set aside for support of WY Military Department facilities.

Legislation bills approved which effects the Military Department were:

1. Transfer the Civil Air Patrol (including Search & Rescue) to Wyoming Military Department.
2. Eliminated requirement for WY NG personnel to complete "basic military training" prior to being eligible to receive educational assistance.
3. Servicemembers Civil Relief Act which applies protection to NG members ordered to active duty by state or federal for a period of 30 consecu-

tive days.

4. Amended provisions of Veteran Burial Teams for payment of military funeral duties performed and reimburse WY Veteran Commission for expenses in processing claims.
5. Provided for the observance of Veteran's Day, 11 Nov, each year with a Governor's Proclamation and work with school boards to exercise observance of the contribution and sacrifices of veterans.
6. Relating to unemployment compensation, providing employers' accounts not be charged for benefits paid to a worker displaced by a returning member of the armed forces.
7. Provided appropriations for the development of a master plan of the Oregon Trail State Veterans' Cemetery.
8. Created a "Military Assistance Trust Fund" of \$5 million dollars to alleviate financial hardships faced by families of WY residents serving in the armed forces. Interest from the fund will be used as a last resort to finance families with emergency problems (furnace replacement, plumbing problems, etc.) An immediate \$600,000 was made available. WY Family Assistance Program will provide rules and regulations for administering these funds.

RETIRED CAPS

The WY (Army/Air) Guard Retired baseball caps, made famous by BrigGen (Ret) Baldeswiler and now being distributed by WMHS, have sold well in the first 6 months. The caps are dark brown with lettering and bucking bronco in gold. The bronco is of a pattern from one of George Ostrom's drawings. Lettering has either "Wyoming Army Guard Retired" or "Wyoming Air Guard Retired." Cost is \$10 plus \$2.00 if mailed. Make your \$12.00 check payable to WMHS and mail to Bob Holmes, 1508 Hot Springs Ave., Cheyenne, 82001-5361 or if in Cheyenne stop by and pick one up personally for \$10.00.

WARRANT OFFICER CORPS

9 Jul 04 will mark the 86th year of the Warrant Officer Corps. Effective 9 Jul, WOs will no longer wear the "Eagle Rising" and WOC will be eliminated. Also, the present W5 insignia will be replaced by a silver bar with a center black stripe. Same design used by Navy & USMC. WOs will wear the branch insignia based on MOS. "Coat of Arms of US" insignia will be placed on all service caps. Branch of service color lapel, sleeve and hat ornamentation should be sewn on all appropriate uniforms by 9 Jul 2004. "Rising Eagle" will be only worn by WO candidates until graduation from WOCS. Then they begin wearing their branch insignia. Intent of change is to foster WO integration into a single Army officer corps.

SBP OFFSET

SBP reduction of surviving spouse annuities at age 62 is now called 'Military Widows Tax.' In Mar, both House and Senate passed versions of the FY 2005 budget that included a fix of the SBP annuity reduction. House committee has already passed its' plan which would set payments at 40% 1 Oct 2005, 45% 1 Apr 2006, 50% 1 Apr 2007 & 55% 1 Apr 2008. Committee for the Senate had not established a plan at time of this writing. Senator Landrieu (D-LA) was expected to present a plan similar to the House version. It has never come this close before in ending this unjust penalty. There is still a long road ahead with Senate version, the two versions matching and the Presidents' signature. We must continue to build pressure on congress until the budget bill becomes law and eliminates the "Military Widow Tax."

DATE OF BIRTH (DOB)

WMHS & TAG WY together have a program to recognize long time WY NG retirees which requires knowing their DOB. Please, those born in 1925 & 26 send your DOB ASAP to one of the publication staff members.

960TH REUNION

960th Designation has always been in Torrington, WY since WWII. The unit and local retirees are going to hold a reunion the weekend of 14 Aug 2004 for all who have ever served in the 960th (1946 to date). Reunion will be held in the new ARNG Armory and cost will be \$25. Correct addresses are hard to come by. Reunion committee is asking those interested in attending to call one of the following so they can mail the registration form & agenda: Harold Ramirez (307) 532-7553 or cell (307) 534-45121; 960th Armory (307) 532-2441 or 772-5861. If in Cheyenne call 1LT Jim Ezell at TAG WY 772-5278.

SPACE A TEST EXTENDED

The one year test of Space A travel for family members of retired military in CONUS has been extended indefinitely. Under the test, family members of retirees are able to travel Space A aboard military flights when accompanied by their sponsor. Test does not apply to grey area retirees.

HOTLINE CONTACTS

TAG WY has POC hotlines to answer retiree/widow issues and/or questions. Grey area retirees upon reaching age 60 and recent widowed spouses should contact the hotline for assistance in processing claims. Points of Contact are:

ARNG: CW2 Rose Huber, 1-800-832-1959, ext 5348 or Cheyenne local call 772-5258.

ANG: MSgt Craig Helart, 1-800-832-1959, ext 6325, local 772-6325

EMAIL ADDRESSES

Email continues to be a great tool to send important information between newsletters. There is still a big difference between 1280 plus mailings and just 260 with email. Some of you forgot to provide your new email address when you changed carrier and you have become lost to our system. Please send your email handle to RHolmes632@aol.com if you wish to become a part of this elite group.

EVENTS AND ACTIVITIES

WY NG events and activities retirees and/or families are invited to attend are listed as follows:

10 Jul: ANG family picnic.

28 Jul: Static worldwide military equipment display, ANG facilities.

10-12 Sep: 300th AFA Bn Association Reunion, Sheridan Holiday Inn.

17-19 Sep: Family Support Conference, Casper.

Every Wednesday, 0900-1000, free coffee for all retirees, ANG facilities.

28-29 Aug: WY ARNG/ANG Golf Tournament, Cottonwood Country Club, Torrington. Cost: \$55.00 which includes green fees Sat & Sun, dinner Sat night, lunch Sun. Mulligan cost additional \$5 each, one per day.

Saturday Events: Pick and pre schedule your own tee time and golf with whomever you wish. Dinner and calcutta starting at 6:00 PM.

Sunday Events: Shot Gun starting at 8:00 AM followed by lunch & awards.

POC: Jerry Roberts 637-8088 or 772-5261; Nick Paustian 836-7708 or 532-0463; Wayne Lindquist 772-6392; Troy Goettsch 772-5003

LOST BUT NOT FOUND

Intent of the newsletter is to keep contact with all retirees/widows. Our list of lost but not found has grown. Help! ARNG: Timothy Carroll, Stephen Davis, Don Enders, Thomas Florence, Gilbert Geisz, Gary Kelly, Robin Lancto, Valerie Martinez, R.W. Mills, David Odell, George Riddle, Gary Ross, Dewey Spreng; ANG: David Baker, Deanna Cowan, Doug Edgerton, David Graham, Brenda Hamar, Howard Johnson, Noreen Kelly, Don Moore, David Rupert, William Slinger.

EARLIER RETIREMENT

There were not less than 9 bills last year to reduce the NG retirement age from 60 to 55 and some to 53. None passed but it was a good start. S1035 and HR742 are still in the hopper and congress needs a boost from all concerned to pass it this year.

TRICARE TIDBITS

Below are answers to questions often asked about medical care.

Q. Can a provider charge more than the 115% Medicare/Tricare limit?

A. No, under the law it cannot, however, if the patient signs a waiver it can. It is not legal for a provider to force a patient to sign a waiver as a condition for receiving treatment.

Q. Why is enrollment in Part B a requirement for entitlement of TFL?

A. 1st, because it is the law. 2nd, TFL is a combination of full Medicare plus full Tricare benefits for only a monthly premium cost for Medicare Part B.

Q. Under the law, a widow who remarries loses TFL eligibility. Then why not can a widow be reinstated if divorced from the 2nd marriage?

A. Under the federal law, a military widow once remarried loses TFL eligibility for life. However, there has been changes that might allow a widow to be eligible for CHAMPVA for life. Write to CHAMPVA-Eligibility, PO Box 469028, Denver, CO 80246-9028 or call 1-800-733-8887.

Q. How come Medicare/TFL sometimes does not pay all claims in full?

A. Occasionally, a claim for treatment may not be covered by Medicare but is covered by TFL or visa versa, such as chiropractic care is covered by Medicare but not TFL.

Q. When will I be issued a Tricare/TFL ID Card?

A. Only ID card needed for Tricare/TFL treatment is your military/dependent ID card. No other card is issued unless enrolled in Tricare Prime.

Q. Will buying the new Medicare discount card help reduce prescription expenses verses Tricare/TFL Pharmacy options and/or VA options?

A. Not in the slightest. Under the Tricare Retail Network and Tricare Mail Order Pharmacy Plans or drugs obtained through the VA, beneficiaries are paying the smallest drug co-payments in the nation. Studies show that difference can be as much as 50% lower than with the new card.

COMMAND CHANGES

Col. Bruce Asay assumed the position of Asst AG for WY ANG and was promoted to BrigGen on 6 Jun 2004, replacing BrigGen Jenenne Nelson who retired on 3 May 2004.

LtCol Dave Sullivan took command of the 187th Aeromed Evac Sq during ceremonies at the Apr 2004 drill. LtCol Sullivan had served as the Sq Chief of Operations for the previous 10 years.

COL Tim Sheppard assumed the position of WY ARNG Chief of Staff, replacing COL Larry Barttelbort who retired on 30 Jun 2004.

LTC Greg Porter is now commander of the 94th Troop Command.

CPT Nona Nissen is the new commander of 1041st Engr Bridge Co.

COL Olin Oedekoven assumed command of the rear detachment for the 115th FA Bde. He will oversee Bde responsibilities state side which includes battalions in 3 states.

COL (Retired) Barttelbort was selected to assume the new civilian contract position as Coordinator of the WY ESGR program 1 Jul 2004.

WY ARNG DEPLOYMENTS

Following WY ARNG personnel were mobilized for 545 days during the Jan 2004 time frame and all are presently at overseas assignments: 115th FA Bde WY ARNG has 59 soldiers stationed in various camps in Kuwait.

2-300 FA Bn, WY ARNG deployed 182 soldiers to perform MP duties as part of Operation Iraqi Freedom.

63 soldiers of the 1022d Med Co are stationed in Kuwait performing med evac missions with their UH-60 helicopters.

31 WY ARNG are on AD thru end of 2004 as part of the WY ANG security force in Cheyenne.

At present Army National Guard makes up over 40% of the Force for Operation Iraqi Freedom. CNGB says that figure should drop to about 30% sometime during 2005.

WY ANG ON TWO YEAR MISSION

WY ANG began a 2 year mission in support of Operation Iraqi Freedom in Feb 04. Mission calls for personnel and equipment to rotate in and out of Kuwait area, mostly on 90 day intervals, providing airlift support for US forces.

WY ARNG UNIT RETURNS

The 20 members of the 4ID ROC were returned to their home station in Casper on 7 Apr. The unit left Casper on 27 Jan 03, and spent the last 11 months in Iraq and Kuwait.

115TH BRIGADE ADOPTED

University of WY Athletic Department adopted deployed troops of 115th FA Bde, WY ARNG. The UW football team will wear the Bde patch on their helmets during the 2004 season.

MEDICARE, PLAN B

As earlier announced in Mar newsletter, some 90,000 military medicare eligible can enroll in Plan B without penalty during 2004. Six months has already been lost due to administrative delays. The plan now is to go positive and automatically by mail enroll every medicare eligible beneficiary who is not currently enrolled in Part B. Upon receipt of the mailing the person can choose what month left in 2004 to start enrollment or refuse with the option to wait until a special enrollment period to enroll. Same federal legislation provided for those enrolled in Part B between Jan 01 and Dec 04 would no longer have to pay a penalty for late enrollment beginning Jan 2004. Those who have paid a premium surcharge since 1 Jan 2004 are eligible for a rebate. Details had not been worked out yet at time of this writing. Tricare Management Activity is working closely with Social Security Administration (SSA) to implement the reduction in premium cost and refund the overpayments since 1 Jan to those being penalized. It is suggested those involved need to hound their local SSA office until the law is enacted. There is no excuse for further delay.

TRICARE/TFL PRESCRIPTION PLANS

Effective 1 Jun 04, all Tricare/TFL prescription plans are handled by one company, Express Scripts Inc. Tricare/TFL beneficiaries have three options for obtaining medicine:

Military Treatment Facility can be used but some will not fill civilian doctor written prescriptions and do not carry certain drugs needed by seniors. The medicine service is free.

Tricare Retail Network Pharmacy Plan allows military beneficiaries to fill prescriptions at one of the listed network retail pharmacies using only their military ID card if properly enrolled with DEERS. The pharmacist can fill the prescription for 30 days or less supply and co-payment is \$3.00 for generic drugs and \$9.00 for brand names. Users now have a quick fix for short term requirements. Call toll free 1-866-363-8779 to locate applicable local drug stores which generally are large chain companies.

Tricare Mail Order Pharmacy Plan is the cheapest way to buy medicine other than at a MTF which is free. You must be pre-enrolled before a prescription can be filled. Call toll free 1-866-363-8667 to enroll. Program allows a doctor to write a prescription for a 90 day supply with up to three refills. Co-pay cost for 90 day supply is \$3.00 for generic and \$9.00 for brand names. Orders must be prepaid and delivery time is 5-7 days after receipt of the order. Refills can be ordered 70 days after supply is started.

Tricare/TFL beneficiaries can not use the mail order plan if they have other insurance with drug benefits. Tricare will pay for drugs obtained through retail network plan after all other insurance plans have paid.

COWBOY THUNDER

Most units have a slogan and say it when rendering a salute. 115th FA Bde needed one when they became a part of 25th Inf Div. Since their artillery units made thunder, they became know as "Cowboy Thunder."



WYOMING VETERANS' NEWS

Furnished by the Wyoming Veterans' Commission



POINTS OF CONTACT

As stated on page one, the Wyoming Military Department has combined the Wyoming National Guard Retiree and Wyoming Veteran's newsletters into one publication. This effort will reduce cost and allow an increased outreach while improving communications to our existing veterans as well as provide information to military retirees. Wyoming Veterans' Commission Points of Contact:

Wyoming Veterans' Commission
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5905 CY Ave, Casper, WY 82604
Phone: (307) 265-7372 or (800) 833-5987 (WY only); Fax: (307) 265-7392
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MAJOR PROGRAMS OVERVIEW

Major programs the Wyoming Veterans' Commission are currently working on to provide better service for Wyoming veterans are:

Governor's Veterans Summit, the Strategic Plan, support for the funding to study the feasibility to have a State Veterans Nursing Home, help to locate a federal cemetery at F.E. Warren Air Force Base, referrals from LVER's and DVOP's, extensive statewide outreach by the Veteran State Service Officer, support of the Guard and Reserve, support of Oregon Trail State Veterans Cemetery legislation, Operation Recognition (awarding of high school diplomas to WWII, Korea and Vietnam veterans), Military conflict Service Emblems for Wyoming vehicle license plates, Wyoming Veterans Memorial Museum, Veterans History Project (recording of veteran histories for Wyoming and Library of Congress), Cold War Certificates, Replacement Medals, Corrections to Military Records, the Wyoming Benefits booklet, and a myriad of other state and federal programs. Space will not allow listing all the on going programs. Veterans are urged to contact the commission about programs not listed.

MEANS TEST

There are eight priority categories that control what level veterans are eligible to enroll for Veteran Affairs Health Care (VAHC). In order for a veteran to enroll for VAHC he must complete a "Means Test" (MT), which is a financial report, except for those veterans placed in Priority 1.

The MT report form will include the adjusted gross income for you and your spouse, out of pocket medical expenses for medical, dental, health insurance and co-payments. It can include the monthly \$66.60 deducted from Social Security for Medicare if you have included that amount in your income. The form calls for cash assets in your checking and savings accounts, etc., and any other large valuable assets. It also asks for the value of any real estate property you own, other than your primary residence. The MT will show your complete financial situation and must be kept current annually.

Veterans already enrolled in VAHC must complete a new MT every year on their enrollment date. They are then reevaluated to determine what priority level they qualify for and that determines eligibility for co-payments or free VAHC services. If income becomes very low, they may not have to make any co-payments for services or prescriptions.

There are cases where veterans have not supplied a MT for long periods, such as 2-3 years. They have actually been denied any further VAHC services. Failure to file an annual MT may result in veterans being charged co-pay when they may not need to. The director, Don Ewing, recently encountered a veteran who had been billed for VAHC services and prescriptions. It was a known fact his income was well below the MT threshold. When Mr. Ewing called the Cheyenne VAHC he found out they had changed the veteran's co-pay status since he had not completed a MT for over a year.

VA ENROLLMENT PRIORITIES

Enrollment of veterans for Veterans Affairs Health Care (VAHC) coverage is based on the following eight priorities:

Priority 1: Covers a veteran with service connected (SC) disabilities rated at 50% or more disabling. These veterans do not have to file a Means Test (MT) and do not have to co-pay for VAHC. They do not have to pay for prescription drugs. Secondary insurance providers will be billed for non-service connected (NSC) conditions.

Priority 2: Covers a veteran with SC disability rated at 30% or 40% disabling. These veterans are required to provide a MT. They do not pay for prescription drugs for their SC disabilities. They do have to pay for prescription drugs if the medication is for a NSC disability. Secondary insurance providers will be billed for NSC conditions.

Priority 3: Covers former POW, Purple Heart recipient, veterans whose discharge was for a disability that was incurred or aggravated in the line of duty (LOD), veterans with SC disabilities rated at 10% or 20% disabling, and veterans under certain limited special eligibility classification. These veterans are required to provide a MT. They do not pay for prescription drugs for their SC disability. They do pay for prescription drugs if the medication is for a NSC disability. Secondary insurance providers will be billed for NSC conditions.

Priority 4: Covers veterans who are receiving aid and attendance or house-bound benefits and veterans who have been determined by VA to be catastrophically disabled. These veterans are required to provide a MT. They do not pay for prescription drugs for their SC disability but do pay if the medication is for NSC condition. Secondary insurance providers will be billed for NSC conditions.

Priority 5: Covers NSC disabled veterans and non compensated SC

veterans rated at 0% disability and at poverty level income, veterans receiving VA pension benefits, and veterans eligible for medicaid benefits. These veterans are required to provide a MT. They do have to pay for prescription drugs. Secondary insurance providers will be billed for NSC conditions.

Priority 6: Covers veterans from World War One and Mexican Border War and veterans who are 0% SC disabled and are solely seeking care for disorders associated with presumptive conditions that fall within the guidelines and specifics as determined by VA. These veterans are required to provide a MT. They do not pay for prescription drugs for SC disabilities or for VA approved presumptive disorders. They do pay for prescription drugs given for any other disorders. Secondary insurance providers will be billed for NSC conditions.

Priority 7: Covers veterans with income and net worth above the MT established statutory threshold and agree to pay specified co-payments.

Priority 8: Covers all of the rest of non-disabled veterans with income and net worth well above the MT established statutory threshold.

ANNUAL PHYSICAL EXAMS

It is very important for veterans to maintain their active VAMC status with a minimum of a complete physical examination at least once a year. Some veterans may not have any health ailments and do not continue to visit the VAMC after the initial enrollment examination. They could be dropped from active patient status after 2-3 years. Once dropped it is difficult to get back in the VAMC system. Even if eligible, reentry is dependent on patient load of VA clinics and hospitals at the time. If your priority is very low and you are dropped from an active patient status, you may have to wait in line behind veterans with higher priority ratings.

DIRECTOR'S REPORT

By Don Ewing

December and January were spent refining proposed legislation for the 57th Wyoming Legislature and virtually every day during the session I was in the capital city. I provided testimony on approximately 41 different occasions. Bills sponsored by or testified for were for current soldiers and their families or some changes in our regular statutes. Included were those Wyoming National Guard bills that were supported or testified on by myself or others were:

- * Burial bill payment for services
- * Approval for a \$20,000 master plan for the Oregon Trails Veterans Cemetery
- * Protection for Guard members under the Service Members Civil Relief Act during a state call-up
- * A National Guard Education waiver
- * Transfer of the Civil Air Patrol to the Military Department
- * Protection from employers unemployment insurance increases during a Guard call-up
- * A Veterans Day bill for schools
- * Military Department purchase of land for Camp Guernsey Firing Range to better train soldiers
- * A \$5 million dollar trust fund plus \$600,000 in immediate funds for the Military Department to use in assisting service members and families of Wyoming.

Most bills passed the committee hearings with little opposition. The \$5 million dollar trust did take some major effort on the part of the Adjutant General, MG Ed Wright, and several key legislators.

Now that the legal findings on the Wyoming Veterans Commission and its director have been released with a positive impact, it is hoped the commission can now get on with its job in helping the veterans of Wyoming.

There were two major highlights

since the last director's report.

The first was the Governor's Veterans Summit on April 19th. A great deal of effort and coordination went into this summit, which was attended by 20 separate veteran service organizations. To say that this summit was great is a vast understatement. The morning was spent with each service organization making a brief statement about who they are and what they do. The afternoon was structured as round table discussions. The main thrust of the round table discussion was "how do we help veterans and get the most bang for the buck." There were approximately 60 persons in attendance. Each person was given about one minute to respond to three questions. The vast majority of organizations and members arrived at the same conclusion. We are going to have to work together and share efforts to provide the best assistance for our Wyoming Veterans. There were 21 American Legion attendees, 19 VFW attendees, 11 from DAV plus a number of other organizations and members present. The support of this summit and the feeling of togetherness after the meeting was phenomenal. The legislative committee for each organization is to have a subsequent meeting to find common ground for a united legislative front.

The second major highlight was the Governor's Training for Board and Commission Leadership held on April 21st. This meeting has moved the commission forward administratively by at least two years. It covered the State of Wyoming position on:

Rules and Governance, Meaningful Meetings, Money, Ethics and Conflicts of Interest, Communications, Working with the Press, Marketing and Advocacy and Results based on Strategic Planning. Chairman

Palmer, Vice-Chair Sestak and Commission Director Ewing participated in several of these committees and put what we learned to good use in our 15 May commissioners meeting.

At the May 15th Commissioners meeting, we adopted a mission statement, adopted By-Laws, wrote out commission duties, responsibilities and rules of conduct. We formed committees and adopted a "direction" for the Strategic Plan. This plan calls for the expansion of the commission across the state. It was moved and approved that the Director's office be moved to Cheyenne along with the first Administrative Specialist. The Casper Outreach Office will remain in the Hardy V. Ratcliff Armory and staffed with the State Veteran Service Officer and a secretary to service the veterans in Casper and across Wyoming. We are asking for one Veteran's Outreach Specialist to be located in the Casper Office in addition to the other requested four Regional Outreach Specialists plus support to be located in the four quadrants of the state as of July 2005.

FOLLOW UP APPOINTMENTS

It is extremely important to return at least every six to twelve months after an initial diagnosis or treatment by the VA doctors for a follow up check over and/or review of prescription drug renewals. Most generally it is up to the patient to make sure he is scheduled for follow up appointments. Some VA Health Care facilities do not automatically schedule patients for future medical treatment. It is suggested the veteran make a subsequent appointment for about six months to a year in the future with the VA doctor as you are leaving from the current examination to make sure you are scheduled for follow on treatment or re-evaluation. This fact holds true for each different episode or ailment.

SERVICE OFFICER'S REPORT

by Barry Gasdek

Since the Dec 13th Commissioner Meeting, I outreached, assisted and visited with veterans and their families in Casper, Hanna, Laramie, Medicine Bow, Cheyenne, Torrington, Wheatland, Guernsey, Gillette, Thermopolis, Meeteetse, Cody, Rock Springs, Kemmerer, Green River, Evanston, Buffalo, Sheridan and Jackson. In most cases, these meetings were held in county court houses and/or senior centers. Additionally, I attended the VSO meeting in Cheyenne. I will soon be planning my next schedule for visits and setting up of veterans' information booths starting in July 2004. Applicable cities and/or counties will be notified in advance of their scheduled visit dates.

In February, Director Ewing and I attended and made a presentation at the DWS Training in Casper. In March, I briefed Dr. Biro, VISN 19 Director, on the commission and the veteran situation in Wyoming. April saw the return of the 4th IDROC, WY Army National Guard, to Casper where the commission staff and a large number of families greeted our returning combat soldiers. I gave a talk to the UW ROTC graduates. Also in April, Director Ewing and I made a 1 1/2 hour combat veteran presentation to students at Roosevelt High School in Casper.

The highlight of this time frame was the Governor's Veterans Summit in Cheyenne. It was encouraging that we all came away with the idea that we are all here for the same reason - **HELPING VETERANS!** With 20 organizations present, it is a great start to combine our energies to achieve the best veteran services possible.

Approximately 40% of the veterans I worked with were interested in either enrolling in the Veteran Affairs Health

Care (VAHC) and/or prescription coverage. I also assisted in the filing of claims for Compensation and Pension, Dependency and Indemnity Compensation, Burial Benefits, CHAMPA VA, Home Loans, VA Educational Benefits, Awards, Veterans License Plate Emblems, County Tax Exemption, information on the State Veterans Home, Veterans Cemetery and National Guard Benefits.

MEETING MINUTES

Shown below are the minutes of the Commissioners quarterly meeting, 15 May 2004, in an abbreviated form.

The Meeting was opened by Chairman Palmer at 0900 hours on the 15th of May 2004 with a pledge of allegiance to the flag and a prayer for the Pat Neville family and for those who have lost their lives serving our country. All commissioners were present along with a number of guests. A summary of proceedings is as follows:

1. The previous minutes were corrected to reflect that the commission directed Director Ewing to seek a meeting with both Northern Arapaho and Eastern Shoshone Tribal Councils to discuss ways to better serve their American Indian veterans.
2. A motion was passed that the director attempt to secure approximately \$25,000 in funds for a State Veterans Nursing home study through legislation.
3. A motion was passed to move the director's and administrative specialist's office to the Wyoming Military Department complex in Cheyenne.
4. Standing committees are to be first: Legislative, Chaired by Pete Quinnell and second: Outreach (includes education and communication) and Finance, Chair TBA.
5. A mission statement was adopted:

"The mission of the Wyoming Veteran's commission is to develop, enhance and promote programs,

services and benefits to Wyoming Veterans and their families, through outreach, education, communication and legislation. Working in harmony with the Wyoming State Government, the Wyoming Military Department, US Department of Veteran's Affairs and Veterans' Service Organizations. The commission strives to improve the quality of life of every veteran."

6. By-Laws were thoroughly discussed and after a number of refinements were adopted.

7. With across the state losses of 4 local veteran employment representatives (LVER's), it was moved and carried that the commission ask for staffing to replace these losses with 4 regional veteran outreach representatives, including secretarial help, in each of the state's 4 quadrants. An additional veteran outreach representative to be requested for Casper to somewhat offset the move of the director to Cheyenne.

8. Joe Sestak, Laramie, was appointed Chair of the Strategic Planning Committee with assistance to be provided by Ron Wood, Sheridan.

9. It was moved and passed that the commission support moving the Wyoming Veterans' Memorial Museum from State Park and Cultural Resources to the Military Department with funding for 3 positions.

10. After adjournment, Dorothy Boam, Commissioner from Glenrock, and Chair of "Operation Recognition" made a presentation of a High School Diploma to Mr. Leon Sanders. Mr. Sanders and family came from Missouri to take part in this ceremony.

The Wyoming Veterans' Commission is happy to announce that it has a new commissioner, Mr. Burton Hutchinson Sr., Tribal Chairman of the Northern Arapaho Tribe. The commission looks forward to Mr. Hutchinson bringing to the table ways we can help his American Indian veterans as well as assist all of us with the cultural interchange necessary to carry out our mission.

WYOMING LEGISLATION PASSED

The 57th Wyoming Legislature was very supportive of the Wyoming military forces and veterans. Listed below are the major items passed that benefit the Wyoming veteran. A complete recap of the 2004 Wyoming State Legislature bills that were approved and support the entire Wyoming Military Department are listed on page 4 of this publication.

- * Identity Theft Protection which makes the DD 214 filed with the county clerk confidential.
- * Free WY fishing licenses for 50% or better service connected disability.
- * Free WY state parks passes for 50% or better service connected disability.
- * State retirement credit for mobilized state employees during time activated.
- * Extension of the Vietnam Veteran Tax Exemption.
- * Enabling legislation for the WY Memorial Museum.
- * Allow POW/MIA flags displayed on state buildings and veteran burial teams.

VETERAN STATE BENEFITS

Some of the State of WY veteran benefits you may not be aware of are:
WY VETERAN TAX RELIEF: Combat veterans that served in a defined war zone may have a property tax relief up to \$800 or automobile license relief up to \$150.

WY WIDOWS TAX RELIEF: Widows whose husband qualified under the above tax relief may reinstate the credit with no dollar limit for the remainder of their lives.

FREE WY FISHING LICENCE: You can be issued a free lifetime WY Fishing License if you are a WY resident with 50% or more service-connected disability.

FREE STATE PARKS PASS: You can be issued a free lifetime WY State Parks Pass if you are a WY resident with 50% or more service-connected disability.

VETERAN BURIAL BILL: If your post signs up to participate in this program, for each honor guard performed (one per funeral), the post can be paid a flat sum of up to \$25. Add up the number of funerals a post does in a year and that amount would go a long way toward buying caps, jackets, etc. for your honor guard.

VETERAN LICENSE PLATE EMBLEMS: Military veterans can purchase service emblems for specific conflicts served in for display on their vehicle license plates, front and back. Eligibility conflicts are: WWII 7 Dec 41-31 Dec 46; Korea: 27 Jun 51-31 Jan 55; Vietnam: 1 Jul 58-5 Jun 75 and Gulf War. Generic service emblems reading VETERAN are available for veterans who served during one or more of the conflicts and do not want to specify a conflict or served during a conflict not listed. Only one type emblem will be displayed at a time. A separate application must be made for each emblem requested. Official proof of service must accompany each application. Cost per set for motor vehicles is \$11.50 and \$11.00 for motorcycles (only one emblem issued). Send application indicating which emblem with proof of service to WY Veterans' Commission, % Hardy V. Ratcliff Armory, 5905 CY Ave., Casper, WY 82604. Further information can be obtained at 1-800-833-5987. Statutes governing the issuing of the veteran emblem requires the veteran must be living. Efforts are being put forth to change the law so a widow could display the appropriate emblem.

STUDY RELEASED

The CARES Commission Study Report has been released and approved by the Secretary of Veterans Affairs. For those veterans of Wyoming and those located in surrounding states, it is great news! Cheyenne VAMC retains all of its existing services and will be adding more in the near future.

As a result of the CARES Report, a study is being conducted by the VA concerning improving services by Veterans Rural Health Hospitals which includes the Cheyenne VAMC. The entire report and future Veteran Affairs plans and proposals can be reviewed by logging on to www.va.gov/CARES.

DD FORM 214

If you have never before visited with the Wyoming Veteran Service Officer, a VA facility, or the Wyoming Veterans Commission about your eligibilities for veteran benefits, you are urged to bring your official military discharge/separation paper called the DD Form 214 with you. Most generally referred to as DD214. This is the key verifying document used to apply for almost all Veteran Affairs benefits.

Lost your DD214 or do not know where it is? That is okay too. You can apply to the National Personnel Records Center in St. Louis, MO for a copy of your military records. In some cases good copies are not available or lost and they will issue a substitute. In all cases, copies of these records sent will have a certification stamp on the form. These forms are recognized by all agencies for any benefits that might call for verification of military service. Application form is a one page document titled SF (Standard Form) 180. The commission will help you fill out the form and send it to the appropriate agency as well as a myriad of other VA or State of Wyoming documents.

THE FEDERALISTS

Samuel Adams once advised: "If you love wealth better than liberty, the tranquillity of servitude better than the animating contest of freedom, go home from us in peace. We ask not your counsels of arms. Crouch down and lick the hand which feeds you. May your chains set lightly upon you and may posterity forget that ye were our countrymen."

AGENT ORANGE

US used herbicides during the Vietnam War to destroy jungle foliage and expose the enemy. Agent Orange was used the most and harmed thousands of veterans. For years the government denied any claim by a veteran for exposure to the chemical. VA compensation is now available for veterans and their dependents suffering from illnesses or disabilities related to the exposure during the Vietnam War. Vietnam veterans and/or their dependents qualify if time served in Vietnam was during 9 Jan 62-7 May 75 & conditions are one the following: Chloracne; Non-Hodgkin's lymphoma; Multiple myeloma; Respiratory cancers of lung, trachea or bronchus; Prostate cancer; soft-tissue sarcoma; Hodgkin's disease; Porphyria cutanea tarda; Peripheral neuropathy (acute or sub-acute); Type-2 diabetes; Spina bifida in children of veterans; Chronic lymphocytic leukemia (CLL).

TREATMENT FOR STROKES

Bats can give a person a good scare but they also could help in the treatment of stroke victims. Germans researching with PAION GmbH have found a protein from bat saliva can triple the treatment window up to nine hours after a stroke begins. Current treatment for strokes caused by a blood clot located in the brain is most effective if given within 3 hours of the first stroke symptom. According to the National Stroke Association (NSA) researchers tested patients with a Desmoteplase which is a version of a blood clot dissolving protein found in the saliva of vampire bats. Results show scientists are one step closer in finding an alternative treatment for stroke, which is the third leading cause of death and the leading cause of disability in the United States. NSA spokesperson said a solution may have been found for stroke that is effective and allow more treatment time for patient to survive.

TO YOUR HEALTH

Are sleeping pills the answer for trouble in sleeping? As we get older sleep patterns change, time between lying down and asleep increases while ratio of time asleep to time in bed decreases. Although sleep inducing medication can help it is not a long term solution. Pills can become an addiction with no result in sleeping. Some helpful hints are to refrain from caffeine, alcohol, nicotine and many prescription drugs containing caffeine several hours before bedtime; establish regular sleeping schedule and bedtime routines; eliminate or minimize daytime napping; exercise early in the evening; reserve the bed for sleeping not TV; eliminate excess light and noise; keep temperature comfortable but cool; avoid heavy evening meals but have light snacks with milk before bed. A person should seek medical consultation and treatment if trouble in falling asleep continues.